

Iowa Regulations

In Iowa, it is illegal to possess, introduce, purchase, sell, or transport aquatic invasive species and to operate a watercraft in a marked aquatic invasive species infestation area. A person violating these regulations is subject to a \$100 fine. To report violations, contact your local conservation officer or fisheries office.

For More Information

If you would like more information about aquatic invasive species, the problems they cause, regulations to prevent their spread, or methods and permits for their control, contact:

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Aquatic Nuisance Species Program
1436 255th Street
Boone, Iowa 50036
515-432-2823
www.iowadnr.com/fish/index.html



www.ProtectYourWaters.net



Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the programs and activities of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is available to all individuals regardless of race, color, national origin, disability, or age. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 East 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

This information is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting the DNR at 515-281-5918 (TDD number 515-242-5967) or by writing the DNR at 502 East 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

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HELP STOP Aquatic Hitchhikers



Cover photo: Deborah Rose, MNDNR



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**
Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean *all* recreational equipment.

Enjoying the great outdoors

is important to many of us. Boating, fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching are traditions that we want to preserve for our children and their children. Today, these traditions are at risk. Aquatic invaders such as round goby, zebra mussels, purple loosestrife, Eurasian watermilfoil, bighead and silver carp, and New Zealand mudsnail threaten our valuable waters and recreation. These and other non-native, or exotic, plants and animals do not naturally occur in our waters and are called *invasive species* because they cause ecological or economic harm.



Paul Stafford, Minnesota Office of Tourism

The main way invasive species get into lakes, rivers, and wetlands is by "hitching" rides with anglers, boaters, and other outdoor recreationists. If you leave a body of water without taking precautions recommended in this brochure, you may be transporting these harmful species from one lake, river, or wetland to another. These "aquatic hitchhikers," such as Eurasian watermilfoil (right), have invaded many waters, doing irreparable harm to lakes, streams, and wetlands and their native inhabitants.

Eurasian watermilfoil



MNDNR

The good news is that the majority of waters are not yet infested with invasive species and you can help protect our valuable waters.

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

Aquatic hitchhikers can spread in many ways such as on aquatic plants, on recreational equipment, and in water. Fortunately, there are a few simple actions you can take to prevent them from spreading.



In many states and provinces it is illegal to transport aquatic invasive species, so taking the following actions may also help avoid a citation (see back page).

INSPECT your boat, trailer, and equipment and **REMOVE** visible aquatic plants, animals, and mud before leaving the water access.

It is important to carefully remove all plant fragments before you leave the access area to ensure you are not transporting an invasive plant species. This will also reduce the threat of moving zebra mussels that hitchhike by attaching to aquatic plants.



Deborah Rose, MNDNR



"Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!" is a national campaign that helps recreational users to become part of the solution in stopping the transport and spread of aquatic invasive species.

✓ **DRAIN** water from your boat, motor, bilge, live wells, and bait containers before leaving the water access.

Many types of invasive species are very small and easily overlooked. For example, zebra mussel larvae are invisible to the naked eye. Seeds or small fragments of invasive plants, spiny waterfleas, eggs of fish and small aquatic animals, and fish diseases can be carried in water. Draining water before you leave the access area will effectively reduce the chance that any remaining plants and animals survive.



Deborah Rose, MNDNR

✓ **DISPOSE** of unwanted bait and other animals or aquatic plants in the trash.

Releasing live animals and plants in a lake, river, or along the shore often causes invasive species to become established. Identifying fish when they are small is difficult and it is hard to be absolutely sure there are no invasive fish in your bait bucket. Even earthworms that you collect in northern states or buy for bait are not native and should not be dumped on the ground. Likewise, other aquatic plants or animals that you collect, or buy in a pet store, should never be released into the wild.

Round goby

Center for Great Lakes and Aquatic Sciences

Round gobies are bottom-dwelling fish from Europe. They're aggressive, attacking bait and eating the eggs of other fish, such as smallmouth bass. This aggressive behavior contributes to the decline of valuable sport fish populations.

Silver carp

David Riecks, IL-IN Sea Grant

Silver (pictured) and bighead carp from Asia are threats to aquatic ecosystems and water recreation. Silver carp can jump into boats and hit boaters and waterskiers. Because young silver carp look similar to native minnows they could accidentally be spread via live bait.

Spiny waterfleas

Spiny waterfleas are tiny animals that can be a problem for anglers because they form gelatinous globs on fishing lines, lures, and down-rigger cables. Their eggs can remain viable out of water for a long time, so it is important to inspect and remove them from equipment.

✓ **REPORT** new sightings.

If you suspect a new infestation of an invasive plant or animal, save a specimen and report it to a local natural resource or Sea Grant office. Many agencies have "ID" cards, Web sites, and volunteer monitoring networks to help you identify and report invasive species.

✓ **SPRAY, RINSE, or DRY** boats and recreational equipment to remove or kill species that were not visible when leaving a waterbody. Before transporting to another water:

- Spray/rinse with high pressure, and/or hot tap water (above 104° F or 40° C), especially if moored for more than a day.
- Or –
- Dry for at least five days.

Zebra mussel

Deborah Rose, MNDNR

Zebra mussels attach to native mussels, plants, and boats. They foul beaches, cut swimmers' and dogs' feet, interfere with food webs, and clog water intakes.

✓ **CONSULT** your natural resource agency.

Do-it-yourself control treatments could be illegal and can make matters worse by harming native fish, wildlife, and plants. It is best to contact your natural resource agency before you try to control an invasive species or add new plants along your shoreline. These agencies can provide recommendations and notify you what permits are required.

Purple loosestrife

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Purple loosestrife invades wetlands, degrading wildlife habitat. Its seeds can be present in large amounts in mud that might be incidentally moved on waders, boots, and equipment.

✓ **ADDITIONAL STEPS** are recommended for the following activities.

Shore and fly-fishing

Remove aquatic plants, animals, and mud from waders and hip boots.

Drain water from bait containers.

Personal watercraft

Avoid running engine through aquatic plants.

Run engine for 5-10 seconds on the trailer to blow out excess water and vegetation from internal drive, then turn off engine.

Remove aquatic plants and animals from water intake grate, steering nozzle, watercraft hull, and trailer.

Sailing

Remove aquatic plants and animals from hull, centerboard or bilgeboard wells, rudderpost area, and trailer.

Scuba diving

Remove aquatic plants, animals, and mud from equipment.

Drain water from buoyancy compensator (bc), regulator, tank boot, and other containers.

Rinse suit and inside of bc with hot water.

Waterfowl hunting

Remove aquatic plants, animals, and mud from boat, motor, trailer, waders or hip boots, decoy lines, and anchors (elliptical and bulb-shaped anchors can help reduce snagging aquatic plants).

Cut cattails or other plants above the waterline when they are used for camouflage or blinds.



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